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George Bush helping GOP — maybe himself

Former CIA Director George W. Bush says he is campaigning for Republican Party hopefuls throughout the country this year with his own eye toward the presidential nomination in 1980.

Bush made the remarks Wednesday at a cocktail reception fund-raiser for Bob Chase, the Republican candidate for the 2nd District Congressional seat, at the Holiday Inn Clayton Plaza. Chase faces Democratic incumbent Robert A. Young in the Nov. 7 contest.

BUSH IS ONE of several persons mentioned as presidential contenders who have been sent to St. Louis by the Republican National Committee to drum up support for Chase. The race has been targeted as one House seat the GOP hopes to recover. The contest is expected to be close because Young is likely to draw wide support from the large organized labor turn-out being mustered to defeat the right-to-work amendment on the ballot.

Bush, who has served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, U.S. envoy to the People's Republic of China and chairman of the National Republican Committee, said he has toured 36 states in the last six months.

Bush said he is not being coy about his presidential hopes, but he said he will not make any formal decision on his candidacy until next year.

"I AM VERY interested and I feel I'm qualified, but I think we ought to be

out trying to help other people get elected this year and help the party," Bush told the crowd of about 200 persons.

Bush predicted that the GOP will pick up 25 seats in the House of Representatives in the November election, including the 2nd District in Missouri.

He said the American public holds President Carter and the Democratic administration responsible for domestic economic problems. People are beginning to realize that the three major issues of this year's campaign — inflation, high taxes and excessive government regulation — have always been Republican issues, Bush said.

"THE DEMOCRATS have controlled both houses of Congress for 40 of the last 44 years, and now it's time they pay the price," Bush said. And while Carter may have gained some popularity with the American public by easing the way for Mideast peace treaty negotiations, the main focus of the campaign is economic issues, Bush said.

Even in foreign policy the president has waffled, Bush charged.

Bush said that even in the face of a serious economic crisis, Americans want strong defense and intelligence operations to meet the Russian challenge.

"And I want to see people like Bob Chase go to Washington to get Congress off the backs of the FBI and the CIA and put some strength in America's defense," he said.